encirclement through Belgium which the Germans carried out, and by the number of troops which they concentrated upon the Western Front for the opening move of the War.

Joffre's mis-

c Au ^ ' ig T4 The "suit was that they were able to make their advance almost unchallenged, save by the archaic fortifications of Liege and Namur, which their heavy field artillery—another unexpected blow for the Allies—soon reduced. The army under Von Kluck swept through Belgium along a line further north than Joffre had anticipated, and was scarcely checked at all, overwhelming the resistance of the small British force. It swung down to Paris, and very nearly brought to success the German purpose of capturing Paris, sedanising the French Army, and knocking France out of the War.

Thus to the striking advance of the Germans several factors of surprise contributed :—

(1) The German forces mobilised and brought to the Western Front in the first few days of the War were far stronger than Joffre had calculated.

(2) The advance of Von Kluck's Army through Central Belgium to the north of Lanrezac was unexpected.

(3) The Germans used for field warfare guns of a far larger calibre than either the French or the British anticipated or possessed themselves. And yet French Headquarters had been for

years in
possession of the German plan and had every
indication that it was to be carried out. They
knew all about the German heavy artillery. The
surprise was its mobility.

(b) The Battle of the Marne.

The First Battle of the Marne—second to none in